

Walking works. Except on MacArthur Road. Maybe.

The Bethlehem Gadfly Serious Issues, Walkability and Bikeability September 10, 2019

(29th in a series of posts on Walkability and Bikeability)

“Right now, we can’t get people across MacArthur Road. I don’t know how to do it.”

The headline in the print edition was “Whitehall envisions dramatic changes for MacArthur Road.”

What changes, you ask?

Making it more pedestrian friendly.

You gotta be kidding!

But even thinking about it tells you where the world is heading.

“Can we improve public health through innovative transportation design? We know we can, and you can help,” says the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission. “Come talk about it at our next Planning + Pizza session at 12 pm Sept. 11. We’ll be discussing our WalkWorks project, done being through the University of Pittsburgh and PA Department of Health and how we can work together to improve public health through design.”

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/planning-pizza-walkworks-tickets-56120296317>



Tom Shortell, “Dramatic changes in mind for MacArthur Road that could change how Lehigh Valley lives, works and shops.” Morning Call, September 8, 2019.

Side by side, two women stroll through a crosswalk in a bustling shopping district. Behind them, a LANTA bus picks up passengers from a covered shelter. Trees shade two cyclists as they ride in a bike lane separated from four car lanes and two bus lanes. Pedestrians outnumber motor vehicles. Few Lehigh Valley readers would identify this scene included in a new regional report if not for the title at the top of the image — MacArthur Road.

Officials with Whitehall Township and the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission acknowledged the image may not ever be a realistic vision of the region’s commercial heart and one of its most unwelcoming roads to pedestrians.

“The world is changing, and we are going to have to evolve or we’re going to die,” Whitehall Township Mayor Michael Harakal said in a recent interview. “We are working to try and re-envision the future.”

The FutureLV report by the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission is encouraging municipalities to rethink their commercial corridors and how they develop their communities. Key among those steps is making areas more pedestrian friendly, which could reduce congestion and promote healthier lifestyles.

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission and PennDOT have placed a greater emphasis on making communities more accessible in recent years, with the planning commission taking stock of bike paths, walking trails and sidewalks for an ongoing pedestrian and cycling trail study.

“Right now, we can’t get people across MacArthur Road. I don’t know how to do it,” Harakal said.

Making community centers accessible without the use of cars is a strategy proposed as part of the [FutureLV report](#).